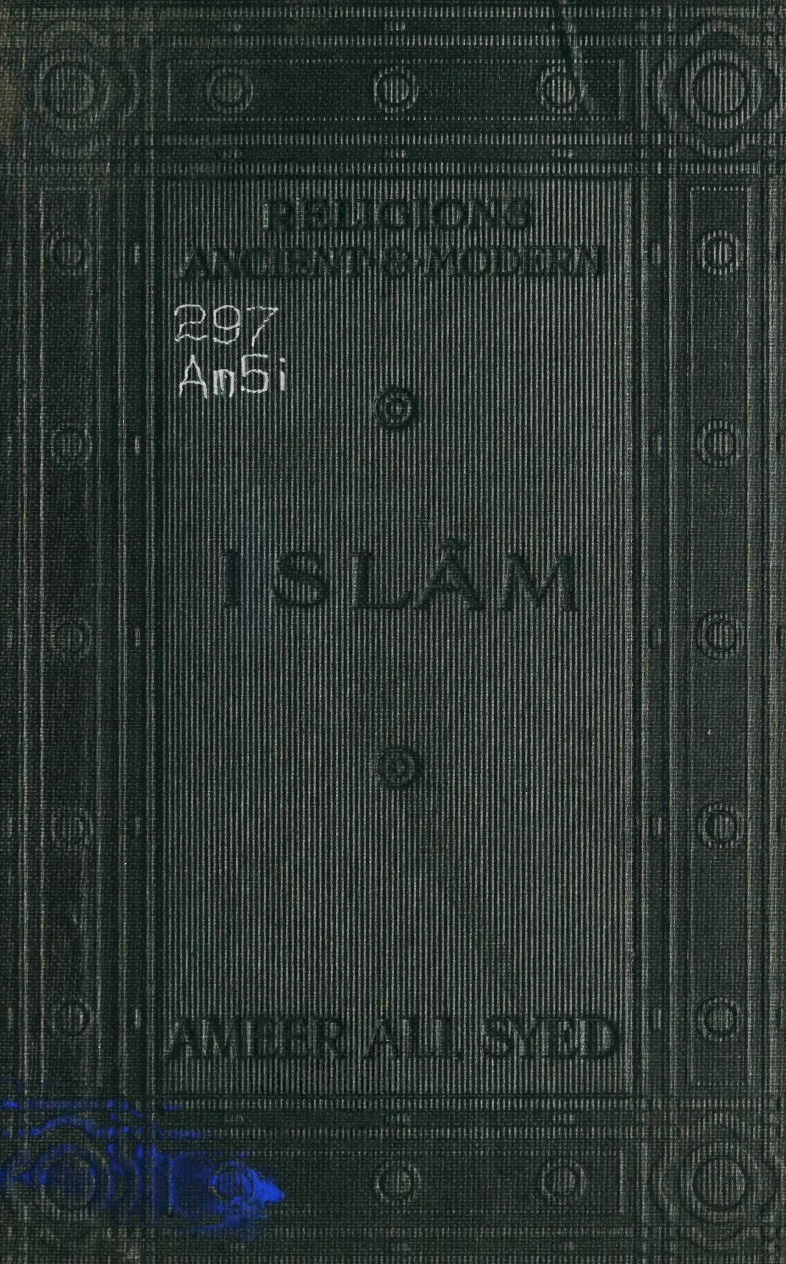


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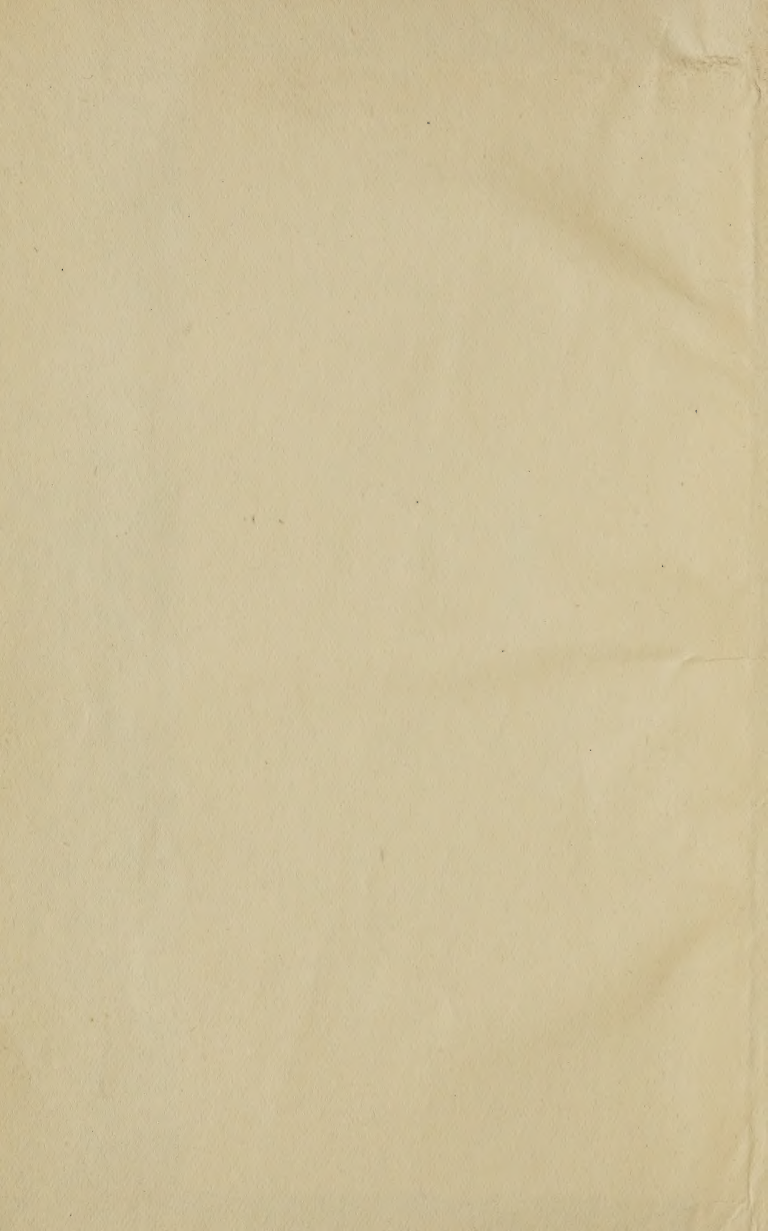
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PREFACE

It is difficult, if not impossible, for any one not endowed with a spirit of sympathy, or the faculty of transporting the mind to the social conditions and moral needs of other times, to do justice to the Teacher of another Faith, especially if that Faith is imagined to be in rivalry with his own.

Generally speaking, the attitude of Christian writers towards Mohammed and his religion is akin to that of the critical Jew towards the Teacher of Nazareth, or of the philosophical Celsus towards Christianity.

In the brochure which the liberalism and enterprise of the publishers enables me to place before the public, I have endeavoured to outline from inside the essential teachings of Islâm and the prominent features of its History. For a fuller and more developed treatment of its ethics and philosophy, of the history of its civilisation and its work in the advancement of culture and humanitarian science, I must refer the student, with all diffidence, to my larger expositions.

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It is to be hoped that this little book, by helping to give an insight into Islâm as it is understood by its professors, may become the means of removing some of the misapprehensions regarding its true aims and ideals, which are undoubtedly the cause of much of the antipathy prevalent in the West, and of the frequent incentives to a modern crusade.

A little more knowledge on both sides, a little more sympathy between two religions which have a common aspiration—the elevation of mankind—will largely conduce to the promotion of peace and good-will on earth.

AMEER ALI.

REFORM CLUB, 1906.

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CHAPTER I

Foreword.—In the history of human development probably no subject is more interesting than the gradual evolution of spiritual ideals, or the endeavour to regulate man's conduct in the ordinary relations of life by determinate ethical standards.

Of all the great systems that aim at the elevation of mankind by an appeal to their religious consciousness, the latest-born is the religion preached by the Prophet of Arabia. The fundamental principles of right and wrong are common to all moral creeds; it is in their vitalising force, the life they infuse into humanity and the direction they give to human energies, that we must seek for elements of differentiation. Some have taken centuries to expand beyond their original circles, others have had to absorb foreign conceptions time after time until their primitive

form became entirely changed before they could influence large masses of people. The religion of Mohammed, unaided by any extraneous help, under the impulse of a great and dominating Idea, within the space of eighty years from its birth, had spread from the Indus to the Tagus, from the Volga to the Arabian Sea. No Darius, Asoka, or Constantine came to its assistance with royal mandates and imperial homage.

Under its influence a congeries of warring tribes consolidated into a nation carried aloft for centuries the torch of knowledge. With the fall of their empire, they ceased to be the preceptors of mankind. The younger nations who succeeded to their heritage continued some of their glory in arms, but less in arts and literature. They too declined in power and influence, and now the greatest of them is but a shadow of its former self. And yet, as an active living Faith Islâm has lost none of its pristine force nor the magic hold it possesses over its followers. In certain parts of the world it is spreading with greater rapidity than any other creed, and its acceptance among the less advanced races has invariably tended to raise them in the moral scale.

'Had the Arabs,' says an able writer, 'pro-

pagated Islâm only, had they only known that single period of marvellous expansion wherein they assimilated to their creed, speech, and even physical type, more aliens than any stock before or since, not excepting the Hellenic, the Roman, the Anglo-Saxon, or the Russian, even so the Arabs would still make a paramount claim on the Western mind.' But the interest becomes deeper 'when we remember that, not only as the head and fount of pure Semitism they originated Judaism and largely determined both its character and that of Christianity, but also the expansion of the Arabian conception of the relations of man to God and man to man (the Arabian social system, in a word) is still proceeding faster and further than any other propagandism.'[1]

Meaning of Islâm.—Islâm is the name which the followers of the Arabian Prophet give to their religion. It means peace, greeting, safety, salvation. It does not involve, however, any idea of fatalism. In its ethical sense it signifies *striving after righteousness.* Man is a free agent within his limited sphere: the ordinances of God lay down the eternal principles of human

[1] Hogarth's *Penetration of Arabia*, p. 7.

conduct. He has pointed out two courses—the one leading away from Him, and that is *evil*; the other bringing man to Him, and that is *good*. Every individual is free to choose and follow whichever course he likes, and receives his deserts accordingly. 'By a soul and Him who balanced it, and breathed into it its wickedness and its piety, blessed now is he who hath kept it pure, and undone is he who hath corrupted it.'[1] But the mercy and help of God are always nigh to direct the humble seeker for divine guidance to take the right path. The faithful observance of one's duty to his fellow beings is the preparation for the future life, which every human being should strive for in this.

The Cardinal Principle of Islâm.—A belief in the unity, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator is the cardinal principle of Islâm, for, in its essence, it is pure Theism, coupled with some definite rules of conduct without which no religion can exercise any abiding influence on lower natures. The whole creation with its manifold phenomena, so varied and yet so uniform, from the single blade of grass springing up in the field to the mighty stars soaring in the firmament, is a proof of His existence, His

[1] Koran, sura xci.

mercy, His love, and His divine Providence 'God: there is no God but He—the Living, the Eternal, no slumber seizeth Him. Whatsoever is in Heaven or in Earth is His.' 'He created the sun, moon, and stars and subjected them to law by His behests.' 'He taketh your souls in the night and knoweth what the work of your day deserveth.'[1] 'He it is who ordaineth the day for awakening up to life.'[2] 'In the alternations of night and day, and in the ship which saileth on the sea laden with what is profitable to mankind, and in the rain-water which God sendeth from heaven, quickening again the dead earth, and the animals of all sorts which cover its surface; and in the change of the winds and the clouds balanced between heaven and earth, are signs to people of understanding.' The God of Islâm is One and indivisible—'the All-mighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Lord of the worlds, the Author of the heavens and earth, the Creator of life and death, in whose hand is dominion and irresistible power; the great, all-powerful Lord of the glorious throne. God is the Mighty, the Strong, the Most High, the Producer, the Maker, the Fashioner, the Wise, the Just, the True, the Swift in reckoning, who

[1] Sura vi. 59-60. [2] Sura xl. 1.

knoweth every ant's weight of good and of ill that each man hath done, and who suffereth not the reward of the faithful to perish.' But the All-mighty, the All-wise, is also 'the King, the Holy, the Peaceful, the Faithful, the Guardian over His servants, the Shelterer of the orphan, the Guide of the erring, the Deliverer from every affliction, the Friend of the bereaved, the Consoler of the afflicted; in His hand is good, and He is the Generous Lord, the Gracious Hearer, the Near-at-hand, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Very Forgiving.' . . . 'Forgiver of sin and Receiver of penitence.' 'He knoweth the secret whisper, the hidden and the manifest.'[1]

Latitude to Human Conscience.—Islâm implies the acceptance of Divine Unity and the Mission of Mohammed; whoever acknowledges the verity of these two conceptions is a Moslem (*Muslim*)—an Islâmist. Belief in God's providence carries with it obedience to His commandments, which lay down the primary bases of human conduct; but failure to observe the mere ritual or to conform to disciplinary rules does not exclude one from Islâm or deprive him of the rights and privileges attached to its profession. So long as the central doctrine of

[1] Sura vi. 95.

the Unity of God and the message of the Prophet is recognised and accepted, Islâm allows the widest latitude to the human conscience.

The Gospel of Islâm is the Koran—the Book—in which are embodied the teachings and precepts of the Arabian Prophet.

From this first principle, the belief in God, spring all the duties human beings owe to Him and to each other. The recognition by man of God's divine grace and mercy, and the constant remembrance of His benefactions is the very essence of the Islâmic Faith. Thus it is enjoined, 'Be constant at prayer, for prayer preserveth from crimes and from that which is blamable, and the remembrance of God is surely a most sacred duty.'[1]

Insistence on the Remembrance of God.—In order to make the remembrance of the Eternal Giver of all-good a part of man's daily life, certain times in the day are set apart to offer Him thanksgiving, to pray for help and guidance in the struggle with earthly passions, and to strive to bring the human soul into communion with its Creator. The following prayer will give an idea of the moral element in the teachings of Islâm.

[1] Sura xxix. 44.

The Moral Element in Moslem Prayers.—'O Lord, I supplicate Thee for firmness in faith and direction towards rectitude, and to assist me in being grateful to Thee and in adoring Thee in every good way; and I supplicate Thee for an innocent heart, which shall not incline to wickedness; and I supplicate Thee for a true tongue and for that virtue which Thou knowest; and I pray Thee to defend me from that vice which Thou knowest, and for forgiveness of those faults which Thou knowest. O my Defender! Assist me in remembering Thee and being grateful to Thee and in worshipping Thee with the excess of my strength. O Lord! I have injured my own soul, and no one can pardon the faults of Thy servants but Thou; forgive me out of Thy loving kindness and have mercy on me; for verily Thou art the forgiver of offences and the bestower of blessings on Thy servants.'

Rules for Devotions.—Although the practice of the Teacher has consecrated certain rules for the performance of the devotions, the ritual of the Koran itself is astonishing in its simplicity.[1] The forms were prescribed for disciplinary purposes and to maintain in Islâm uniformity of practice and cohesiveness. But the main essentials are

[1] See *The Spirit of Islâm* (Pop. Ed.), p. 145.

purity of heart and forgetfulness of self. 'It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces in prayer towards the east or the west; but righteousness is of him who believeth in God. . . . Who giveth money for God's sake unto his kindred, and unto orphans and the needy, and the stranger, and those who ask, and for the redemption of captives; who is constant at prayer and giveth alms; and of those who perform their covenants when they have covenanted, and who behave themselves patiently in hardship and adversity and in times of violence, these are they who are the true.'

Every Place Sacred to God.—As God's mercy and power pervade the universe, and every spot is consecrated to His holy name, the orisons may be offered at any place where the worshipper happens to be at the appointed hour. A remembrance even, a humble prayer whispered in the recesses of the heart, is enough to bring down the grace of the Lord, to cleanse it from impurity and strengthen it for the battle of life. And when the Moslem stands before his God, his first prayer is for divine guidance. 'Praise to God, the Lord of the Worlds, the compassionate and merciful. The Sovereign of the Day of Judgment, to Thee we offer our worship, and from Thee we seek help

and succour. Guide us in the right path, the path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious, and not of those with whom Thou art angered or who have gone astray.'

Purification.—Physical cleanliness was an essential part of worship in almost all the ancient theurgic creeds. In Islâm it is a natural concomitant to the idea of moral purity, for no man is supposed to approach God in a state of uncleanliness. And as an unclean body implies an unclean mind, purification of those parts most likely to be soiled—the hands, feet, and face—is considered necessary before devotional exercise. But it is not indispensable; conditions may exist which may render frequent ablutions impossible. The soldier on the battlefield, the traveller in the desert, the denizen of a wintry land, and others similarly circumstanced may offer their prayers without undergoing any such formality. The rule, though thus liable to qualification, is most beneficent in its tendency. It prevents the growth of that class which is euphemistically described in England as 'the great unwashed,' whilst it promotes in an eminent degree hygienic and sanitary conditions among the masses.

At the same time it is especially inculcated that the Almighty can only be approached in purity

and humility of spirit, and that the most important purification is the cleansing of the heart from all blamable inclinations and frailties, and the mind from all vicious ideas and thoughts which distract the attention from God.

No Priesthood in Islâm.—The absence of a specially interested class to act as intermediaries between God and man differentiates Islâm from all other creeds. In the Islâmic system every man is his own priest and pleads for himself for forgiveness and mercy. 'No sacrifice, no ceremonial invented by vested interests is needed to bring the anxious heart nearer to its Comforter.'[1]

Essentially a democratic creed, it recognises no distinction of race or colour among its followers. High or low, rich or poor, white, yellow, or black are on the same level in the sight of their Lord.

The democratic character of its appeal, its repudiation of all adventitious barriers of caste, explain the powerful fascination it exercises over divers races of mankind.

Belief in a Future Life.—Belief in a future life and accountability for human actions in another existence are two principal doctrines of the Islâmic creed. Both ideas take different shapes in different

[1] *The Spirit of Islâm* (Pop. Ed.), p. 144.

minds according to individual culture and environment. Man is not a fortuitous item in creation; nor does the cessation of life on earth mean an end of the human soul. Physical death only releases it from its earthly habiliments. The soul, which is an emanation from God, exists for ever.

Judaism.—Early Judaism does not show any trace of a belief in a future life or in future rewards and punishment. It is only after the Babylonian Captivity the Jewish mind rose to that conception, and the Zoroastrian *Bihasht* and *Duzakh*[1] became the prototypes of the Jewish hell and heaven.[2]

Zoroastrianism.—Similarly the vivid descriptions of the kingdom of Heaven contained in the Christian Scriptures are without doubt a reflex of the Zoroastrian conception. Thus, at the time of Mohammed's advent, Jew, Christian, and Zoroastrian all looked to material rewards and punishments in a future existence.[3] In Islâm the pains and joys of the Hereafter were used as a lever for

[1] These terms are still in use among non-Arab Moslems to describe the Arabian *Jinnat* ('garden') and *Jehannum* ('hell').

[2] Paradise itself seems to be the hellenised 'firdous' of the Zoroastrians.

[3] See *The Spirit of Islâm*, chapter on the 'Idea of Future Life.'

raising the people from the fetishism and soulless life to which they had become wedded,—to a conception of spiritual ideals and of the duties imposed by God on man.

The Koranic Conception of a Future Existence.—The pictures of a future existence in the Koran are all drawn to suit the comprehension of the people among whom and the age in which the New Gospel was preached. To the famished, thirsty Arab of the desert what could be more comforting or more consonant to his ideas of paradise than rivers of unsullied, incorruptible water, or of milk and honey; or anything more acceptable than unlimited fruit, luxuriant vegetation, inexhaustible fertility? Large masses of Moslems, no doubt, accept in their literal sense all the word-paintings of the Koran, a characteristic by no means confined to the followers of Islâm. But it is a calumny even against those Mussulman literalists to say that they look forward to sensual enjoyment in the next world. The pictures in the Koran of the joys and pains of after-life, although poetical and vivid, give no warrant for such an assertion. 'But those who are pious shall dwell in gardens amid fountains; (they shall say unto them) Enter ye therein in peace and security; and all rancour will We

remove from their bosoms; they shall sit as brethren face to face; weariness shall not affect them therein, neither shall they be repelled thence for ever.' 'For those who do good is excellent reward and superabundant addition; neither blackness nor shame shall cover their faces. These are the inhabitants of Paradise; therein do they abide for ever. But those who have wrought evil shall receive the reward of evil equal thereunto.' . . . 'Blessed are they who fulfil the covenant of God and break not their compact; and who join together what God hath bidden to be joined; and who fear their Lord and dread an ill-reckoning; and who from a sincere desire to please their Lord are constant amid trials, and observe prayers and give alms, in secret and openly, out of what we have bestowed on them; and turn aside evil with good; for them there is the recompense of that abode, gardens of eternal habitation, into which they shall enter, together with such as shall have acted rightly from among their fathers, their wives, and their posterity, and the angels shall go in unto them by every portal (saying), "Peace be with you! because you have endured with patience."' 'Excellent is the reward in that abode!'[1] 'No soul knoweth the joy which

[1] Sura xiii. 20-24.

is secretly prepared for it as a reward for that it may have wrought.'[1]

The Spirituality of Islâm.—Thus behind the description of material happiness portrayed in objects like trees, rivers, and beautiful mansions, with fairy attendants lies a deeper meaning:—'O thou soul which art at rest, return unto thy Lord, pleased and pleasing Him; enter thou among My servants; and enter thou My garden of felicity.'

Sufi Ideas.—A large section of Moslems, especially those inclined to Sufiism, believe, however, that as the human soul is an emanation from God, the highest joy would consist in its fusion with the Universal Soul, whilst the greatest pain would be in a state of separation from the Divine Essence.

The Conception of Evolution.—This idea, with the conception of progressive evolution, has been expressed in a poem of untranslatable beauty by the great poet of Islâmic mysticism which may be paraphrased thus: 'Dying from the inorganic we developed into the vegetable kingdom. Dying from the vegetable we rose to the animal. And leaving the animal we became men. Then why should we fear that death will lower us? The

[1] Sura xxxi.

next transition will make us angels. From angels we shall rise and become what no mind can conceive; we shall merge in Infinity as in the beginning. Have we not been told,[1] "All of us will return unto Him"?'[2]

The Islâmic Conception of the Great Account.—Human conduct in the relations of life consists of a connected sequence of acts the effect of none of which is isolated. The faithful observance of the primary rules of ethics justly regarded as the Divine Laws, like their transgression, stretches far into futurity. Every son of man is thus responsible to his Lord for the use he makes of his life. He will be asked whether the powers he had been endowed with were applied to promote the good and the happiness of his fellow beings or to their detriment; and his reward or punishment, his happiness or misery, will depend on the result of the reckoning at the Great Account as to the manner in fact in which he had obeyed the behests of his Creator.

The Idea of Eternal Punishment Repellent to Islâm.—The idea of eternal punishment is repellent to Islâm. The Lord of the Worlds, who is

[1] That is, in the Koran.

[2] The *Masnawi* of Jalâl-ud-dîn of Rûm; see *The Spirit of Islâm*, p. 393.

swift in meting out justice, is withal pitiful and compassionate. Mercy is His chief attribute; with mercy is joined a supreme love which surpasseth all other love of which the human mind has any conception. Justice is tempered with mercy; and whatever punishment man undergoes here or hereafter is only for purifying and fitting him to enter that state of perfection which will bring him 'nigh unto God.'

Moral Responsibility.—'Just balances will He set up for the day of Resurrection, neither shall any soul be wronged in aught; though were a work but the weight of a grain of mustard seed We would bring it forth to be weighed; and Our reckoning will suffice.' . . . 'O our Lord! forgive us then our sin, and hide away from us our evil deeds, and cause us to die with the righteous.' . . . 'And their Lord answereth them: I will not suffer the work of him among you that worketh, whether of male or female, to be lost.' . . . 'O My servant, who have transgressed to your own injury, despair not of God's mercy, for all sins doth God forgive, gracious and merciful is He.'[1] 'Seek pardon of your Lord and be turned unto Him, verily my Lord is merciful, loving.'[2] 'And

[1] Sura xxxix. 54.

[2] Sura xi. 92.

your Lord saith, "Call upon Me and I will hearken unto you."'[1]

This is the pivot on which the Islâmic doctrine of future life turns, and it is the only doctrinal point an Islâmist is required to accept. 'All the other elements caught up and syncretised from the floating traditions of the races and peoples of the time are mere accessories.'[2]

Nor is the Islâmic belief in disharmony with scientific thought. To quote a recent writer, 'The religious doctrine of ceaseless moral accountability is identical with the scientific doctrine of ceaseless cause and effect. As science postulates matter and force are indestructible, so religion postulates that the human soul is indestructible.'[3]

Suicide Unusual in Islâm.—The belief that the human soul will have to render to its Creator an account of how it has carried out in this life the duties imposed on it has had one important result on Moslem society, the significance of which has often escaped the notice of non-Moslem writers. It has inspired the Moslem with a sense of dignity and feeling of responsibility, which have

[1] Sura xi. 62. [2] See *The Spirit of Islâm*, p. 236.

[3] An interesting pamphlet called *The Agreement between Science and Religion*, by Orlando J. Smith (New York: Farrell).

made self-destruction practically unknown in Islâm.

Suicide was as common among the pagan Arabs as it is now in Christendom. Ecclesiasticism attempted to prevent self-destruction by attaching the most cruel penalties to the offence. The body of a *felo-de-se* could not be interred in consecrated ground; it could only be buried surreptitiously in the dark hours of the night by the roadside where four cross roads met, with a stake through it; his family were subjected to ignominy. None of these forcible rules are needed in Islâm. The belief that divine help is always nigh to relieve the distressed, to help the suffering, to assist the forsaken, arrests the hand of the most despondent or desperate, the most sick and weary with life, from taking his or her own life. Whilst the idea of appearing in the presence of the Almighty Judge before the Summons has come acts as the strongest deterrent to self-destruction. The Moslem will fight even unto death, but will never take his own life, which he regards as a trust from God. Never backward or hesitant in the performance of his duty, he considers it an act of cowardice to fly from personal danger or present unhappiness by putting an end to his existence.

Idea of Corporeal Resurrection.—As in Christianity, some Moslems believe in corporeal resurrection, others do not. Some believe that God can be seen by corporeal sight, others entirely deny it. But all believe that when the human souls are gathered up in the Great Account, the Divine Presence will enfold the Universe.

These outlines represent in brief the Islâmic conception of man's relation to God. Regarding his duties towards himself and his fellow beings it is probably more emphatic and certainly more explicit than any other older system. It denounces self-indulgence, insists upon self-discipline, and makes self-restraint a part of the religious law.

The Ethical Code of Islâm.—The ethical code of Islâm is summarised as follows in the fourth chapter (*Sura*) of the Koran: 'Come, I will rehearse what your Lord hath enjoined on you: that ye assign not to Him a partner; that ye be good to your parents; and that ye slay not your children because of poverty; for them and for you We will provide; and that ye come not near to pollutions, outward or inward; and that ye slay not a soul whom God hath forbidden unless by right . . . and draw not nigh to the wealth of the orphan, save so as to better it . . . and when ye pronounce judgment then be just, though it

be the affair of a kinsman. And God's compact fulfil ye; that is, what He hath ordained to you, Verily this is My right way; follow it then.' . . . 'Blessed are they who believe and humbly offer their thanksgiving to their Lord . . . who are constant in their charity, and who guard their chastity, and who observe their trust and covenants. . . . Verily, God bids you do justice and good and give to kindred their due; and He forbids you to sin and do wrong and oppress.'

Fasting.—Periodical fasting is prescribed as a lesson in the exercise of the subjugation of the senses. Its practical usefulness is most perceptible among coarser natures, for whom in reality it was intended as a measure of discipline of the highest value. 'O ye that have believed, a fast is ordained to you . . . that ye may practise piety, a fast of a computed number of days. But he among you who shall be ailing, or on a journey (shall fast) an equal number of other days; and they that are able to keep it (and do not) shall make atonement by maintaining a poor man.'

Prohibition of Wine.—Islâm characterises drink as 'the mother of all wickedness,' and inebriation, a sin. The prohibition of drunkenness has saved the lower strata of Mussulmans from the degradation and misery which so con-

stantly meet the eye in Western countries; and from the crimes that are usually committed under its effect. We do not hear of parents maddened by drink murdering their offspring; of human beings turning into beasts under the influence of liquor.

Asceticism.—Men and women are not called upon to abandon the world or to practise asceticism in order to attain heavenly life. God has placed human beings on earth that they may work, do their duty by His creatures, and further the Divine purpose. To withdraw oneself from the service of man is to forsake the dictates of duty.

The Dignity of Labour.—The dignity of labour is recognised in express terms; and the man who earns his living by 'the sweat of his brow' is a far better being than one who does not work for his daily sustenance.

Industry and Thrift.—Industry and thrift are virtues just as extravagance is a sin.

'And let not thy hand be tied up to thy neck; nor yet open it with all openness, lest thou sit thee down in rebuke and beggary.' 'And to him who is of kin render his due, and also to the poor and to the wayfarer; yet waste not wastefully.'

Ostentation and vain display of wealth are as

reprehensible as niggardliness. 'Woe to them that make a show of piety and refuse help to the needy.' 'He who spendeth his substance to be seen of men is like a rock with thin soil over it, whereon the rain falleth and leaveth it hard. But they who expend their substance to please God and establish their souls are like a garden on a hill, on which the rain falleth and it yieldeth its fruits twofold; and even if the rain doth not fall, yet is there a dew.' 'Give of that which hath been given you before the day cometh when there shall be no trafficking, nor friendship, nor intercession.' 'Those who abstain from vanities and the indulgence of their passions, give alms, offer prayers, and tend well their trusts and their covenants, these shall be the heirs of eternal happiness.'

He who makes a provision for himself and for his family performs a pious act; whilst the person whose thoughts are centred in his personal indulgence and present enjoyment is unworthy of God's favour.

Envy Reprehended.—The feeling of envy and the desire of mischief-making are condemned in strong terms: 'Covet not the gifts by which God hath raised some of you above others.'[1] 'He who

[1] Sura iv. 36.

shall mediate between men for a good purpose shall be the gainer by it, but he who shall mediate with an evil mediation shall reap the fruit of it. And God keepeth watch over everything.'

Truthfulness Commanded.—Truthfulness is prescribed as a commandment from God. 'O ye Moslems, stand fast to justice, when ye bear witness before God, though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kindred, whether the party be rich or poor. God is nearer than you to both. Therefore follow not passion, lest ye swerve from truth.'

Justice enjoined on Moslems.—Justice is emphatically enjoined. 'Judge between men with truth and follow not thy passions.' 'Touch not the goods of the orphan.' 'Perform your covenants and walk not proudly on the earth.'[1]

Filial Devotion.—Filial devotion is placed in the first rank of duties. 'Defer humbly to your parents; with humility and tenderness say, "O Lord, be merciful to them even as they brought me up when I was helpless."' 'Show kindness to your parents, whether one or both of them attain to old age with thee; and say not to them "Fie," neither reproach them; but speak to them both with respectful speech and tender

[1] Sura xvii. 36.

affection.' 'Moreover we have enjoined on man to show kindness to his parents. With pain his mother beareth him; with pain she bringeth him forth; and he saith, "O my Lord! Stir me up to be grateful for Thy favours wherewith Thou hast favoured me and my parents, and to do good works which shall please Thee; and prosper me in my offspring: for to Thee am I turned and am resigned to Thy will."' 'Reverence your mothers, be good to parents.'

Charity.—Those who are kind and compassionate to their fellow beings are the favoured of God. Every act of kindness is charity. 'Every soul shall bear the good and the evil for which it has laboured; and God will burden none beyond his power.'

'Blessed is he who giveth away his substance that he may become pure, and who offereth not favours to any one for the sake of recompense . . . but only as seeking approval of his Lord the most High.' 'Wouldst thou be taught the *steep* (path)? It is to ransom the captive, to feed the hungry, the kindred, the orphan, and him whose mouth is in the dust.' 'Be good to parents and to kindred and to orphans, and to the poor, and to a neighbour, whether kinsman, or new comer, and to the slaves whom your right hands hold.'

Pride and Vanity Condemned.—Pride and vanity are condemned as sins, whilst forgiveness of offences, meekness, and humility are prescribed as duties. 'Verily God loveth not the proud, the vain boaster'; 'Call on Him with fear and longing'; 'Verily the mercy of God is nigh unto the righteous'; 'Turn aside evil with that which is better'; 'Be of those who enjoin steadfastness and compassion on others'; 'Forgiveness and kind speech are better than favours with annoyance'; 'Blessed are the patient, the truthful, the lowly, and the charitable . . . the forbearing who bridle their anger and forgive—God loveth those who do good to others'; 'The servants of the Merciful are they that walk upon the earth softly; and when the ignorant speak unto them, they reply "Peace" . . . those that invoke not with God any other God, and slay not a soul that God hath forbidden otherwise than by right; and commit not fornication . . . they who bear not witness to that which is false; and when they pass by vain sport they pass it by with dignity: who say, "O our Lord, grant us of our wives and children such as shall be a comfort unto us, and make us examples unto the pious," these shall be the rewarded, for that they persevered; and they shall be accosted in

Paradise with welcome and salutation. For ever therein,—a fair abode and resting-place!' 'Adhere to those who forsake you; speak truth to your own heart; do good to every one that does ill to you!'

Foulness is forbidden: 'Truly my Lord hath forbidden filthy actions, whether open or secret and iniquity and violence'; 'Commit not adultery, for it is a foul thing and an evil way'; 'Let the believer restrain his eyes from lust.'

Quarrelsomeness and public and private disturbance are prohibited. 'And commit not disorders on the well-ordered earth.'

Charity is not left to individual discretion, it is made part of the legal prescriptions. Every man possessed of income has to contribute a certain proportion of his wealth at the end of the year for the keep of the poor and the distressed.

Compulsion in Religion Forbidden.—Compulsion in religion is strictly forbidden. 'What wilt thou force man to believe when belief can only come from God?' 'Let there be no compulsion in religion.' Whilst the attitude towards other creeds is one of humanity and toleration. 'Verily those who believe [the Moslems] and those who are Jews, Christians, or Sabæans, whoever hath faith in God and the last day (future existence),

and worketh that which is right and good—for them shall be the reward with their Lord; there will come no fear on them; neither shall they be grieved.'

Human Duty to Animals.—The new gospel does not overlook in its teachings the duties of man towards the dumb creatures of God. Kind treatment of animals and birds is part of the religion, and a provision for their comfort is equal to charity to human beings. 'There is no beast on earth nor bird which flieth, but the same is a people like unto you—unto God shall they return.'[1]

Pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj).—The ancient shrine of the Kaaba was the honoured memorial of the Arab race. It was the centre of their national life, and its foundation was traced back to Abraham and Ishmael. Tradition had associated certain rites and ceremonies with the pilgrimages the people of the peninsula were accustomed to make to the Temple. Mohammed gave another meaning to the custom. To keep alive the feeling of brotherhood among the Moslems all over the world and perpetuate among the inhabitants of distant lands the memory of the spot where the great Message was

[1] Sura ii. 257, delivered at Medîna.

brought to mankind, they were directed, circumstances permitting, to visit the Holy Shrine once in their lives. Some of the old ceremonies, shorn of their pagan significance, were retained; a few new ones, simple in meaning, were introduced; and the *Hajj* is now the common meeting ground of Moslems of divers races and countries.

Women.—Women, to whom most of the older systems assigned a very inferior position in relation to the stronger sex, obtained in Islâm the place God meant them to occupy in the economy of creation. The right of possessing property, of dealing with what was their own, of exercising all the privileges and powers which belonged to them as sentient beings, were accorded to them equally with the other sex. Marriage made no difference in their status or capacity. And a Mussulman wife became as competent to hold property and make dispositions as a single woman. Nor were they denied a share in the patrimony of their parents or kinsfolk in favour of their male relations. Marriage was declared 'to be an institution ordained for the protection of society, and in order that human beings may guard themselves from foulness and unchastity.'

Polygamy.—Polygamy was recognised as lawful among all the nations of antiquity; and its prac-

tice had received the sanction of the holy personages of Judaism. As among the Kulin Brahmins, the Pagan Arabs put no limit on the number of wives a man might have. In certain stages of development polygamy is not an evil. The Arabian Prophet, with a true conception of the social and moral conditions and necessities of the age and the people, dealt with the question in a manner which harmonises with the most advanced standard, and at the same time meets the needs and requirements of the least progressed.

A Mussulman is allowed to marry one, two, three, or four wives, provided he can deal with all of them 'with equity.' If that be not possible he can marry but one.

Many of the best minds of Islâm have perceived in this rule a virtual prohibition of polygamy. The moral effect of the institution on Mussulman society as a whole can hardly be ignored: it has prevented the growth in Mussulman countries, untainted by foreign social ideas, of that class whose existence is alike an outrage on our humanity and a disgrace to civilisation. Considering how the profession of the *hetairai*, honoured among some nations, despised among others, but tolerated by most, has flourished

through all ages, it is no small credit to the Arabian Teacher that it was so effectually stopped in Islâm.

Divorce.—As in the Jewish system, option was given to the husband to dissolve the marriage tie. At the same time the act was pronounced to be 'the most abominable in the sight of the Lord.'

Bondsmen and Bondswomen.—Only persons taken in lawful warfare were permitted to be held in bondage. The emancipation of bonds-folk was declared one of the highest acts of piety.[1] And any person who made a provision for their ransom was the favoured of God. Traffic in human beings was strictly forbidden, and the man who dealt in slaves was pronounced to be the accursed of God. In a word, human chattelhood is unknown in Islâm; and the institution which is called 'slavery' in Europe and America has no existence in Mohammedan countries. In Islâm, parents were not to be separated from children; brothers from brothers, or one relation from another. The Moslem bondsman and bondswoman were members of the master's family; were on no account to be ill-treated; were to be fed and clothed like the masters and mistresses.

[1] See *The Spirit of Islâm*, chapter on 'Slavery.'

Once emancipated they could intermarry with the master's sons or daughters. Relations with bondswomen were sanctioned by the Rabbinical Laws. They were common in Christian communities, and were freely practised in the Southern States of North America until very recent times by people who considered themselves and were regarded by many others as highly civilised. Among them the issue of a slave-woman was for ever a slave: the smallest taint of slave-blood, however remote, subjected the unfortunate being to be sold as a slave. Although the system of Mohammed, with the object of avoiding a drastic solution, tolerated relations with bondswomen,—with far greater humanity it declared that the issue of such connections were legitimate, and that the bondswoman who bore children to her master was *ipso facto* emancipated; that thenceforth she was no more his bondswoman, but 'the mother of his child.'

Intellectualism.—In the domains of intellect the teachings of Islâm give every encouragement to the cultivation of the mind and make the pursuit of knowledge a religious duty. 'Acquire knowledge,' said the Prophet of Islâm, 'because he who acquires it, performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it,

adores God; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is an ornament in the company of friends; it serves as an armour against our enemies. With knowledge the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associates with the sovereigns of the world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next.' 'The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.' 'He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God.' 'He who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to Paradise.' 'To listen to the instructions of science and learning for one hour is more meritorious than attending the funerals of a thousand martyrs—more meritorious than standing up in prayer for a thousand nights.'[1]

This brief summary of the principal teachings of Islâm will probably enable the reader to form

[1] See *The Spirit of Islâm*, chapter on the 'Literary and Scientific Spirit of Islâm.'

a fairly accurate notion of the aims and aspirations of the new Gospel and of its work in the elevation of mankind in the moral and social scale. But the conception will hardly be clear without some knowledge of the history of the Teacher or some idea of his wonderful and engaging personality.

CHAPTER II

Mohammed.—Mohammed—the Praised—as his name implies, was born in Mecca in the year 570 of the Christian era.[1] The foundation of this city lies in the dim past. It was held by many tribes before it came into the possession of the Koreish, the noblest of them all. Its famous temple, now the holy shrine of the Kaaba, gave it pre-eminence over all the cities of Arabia, and made it the commercial and religious capital of the peninsula. At the time of the Prophet's birth, the government of Mecca was vested in a Decemvirate, of which his grandfather was the chief. Mohammed's father died before his birth; his mother when he was only six years old.

The doubly orphaned child, bereft of all that parental tenderness which forms the blessing of early childhood remained in his grandfather's charge for three years, when the death of the

[1] 29th August 570 A.C.

venerable patriarch threw him on the care of his uncle—Abû Tâlib. Mohammed spent his youth as a member of Abû Tâlib's family.

His Love of Solitude and Communion with God.—Fond of solitude, he spent many an hour in the desert in communion with the mighty living Soul of the Universe. Deeply versed in the language of nature, 'the signs of God' around him, and the folklore and traditions of the people amongst whom he lived, education in the conventional sense of the term he had none. And the proud title of the 'Unlearned Prophet' was ever his.

Thus the orphan son of Âmina, the sweet lady with the sweet name, which to this day evokes a pathetic remembrance in the heart of every Moslem, grew from infancy to youth, and from youth to manhood with many thoughts in his mind, brooding over the moral desolation that surrounded him,—for his people were sunk in the grossest idolatry, wedded to outrageous practices, given over to female infanticide. The religion and ways of their Jewish and Christian neighbours were equally debased, barbarous, and inhuman. In early manhood he made two journeys to Syria, where was opened before him a page which naturally revolted a sensitive mind. He

found Christian sects rending each other to pieces; he saw the effect of incessant wars and strifes on the people, their utter misery and degradation. And he returned filled with pity and disgust.

Marriage with Khadîja.—In his twenty-fifth year he married Khadîja, a widow of noble birth and much wealth, fifteen years his senior in age. His marriage lifted him above the ordinary cares of this world. But it did more. It gave him not only a loved wife, but a devoted friend who brought him solace when he needed it most on his return torn and distressed from his solitary meditations; who gave him comfort when hunted by his enemies, who ever stood by his side in the darkest hours of his ministry.

Wins the Title of al-Amîn or the Trusty.—For fifteen years he thus lived leading a life which won him the love and respect of his towns-folk, who, in their admiration for his character, bestowed on him the title of *al-Amîn*—the Trusty. He spent most of his time in solitude, in meditation, and musing. When 'the Call' came he was frightened. Returning to his wife he told her the story of his vision, of his agony at the thought that he was losing his mind. Her belief that he was to be the destined Messenger

of God to his people was balm to his heart; and brought back the faith, the hope, the trust in God's merciful Providence and love for mankind. One night, when lying wrapt in thought, the Voice of God spoke to his soul in unmistakable notes.

Henceforth his life is a record of unceasing struggle to reclaim the Koreish and the surrounding people from idolatry and the practices of heathenism, to teach them their duty to God and man. The first to accept his mission were his beloved wife, his cousin Ali, the son of Abû Tâlib, his uncle, the brave and chivalrous Hamza, the faithful Abû Bakr, and several other men and women who knew him intimately and loved and revered him. Most of them were people of position, wealth, and intelligence; others were simple, honest folk in the lower walks of life.[1] They were followed by Omar, at one time a staunch opponent, but after his conversion a pillar of strength to the new Faith.

Beginning of Persecution. — Mohammed's preachings evoked a furious outburst of persecution against him and his followers, but he did not falter in his purpose or flinch from the task

[1] Like Balâl, the first muezzin of Islâm, originally a negro slave.

God had imposed on him. When the sufferings of his disciples became unbearable, he advised them to seek refuge in the kingdom of the Negus, of whose tolerance and hospitality he had heard reports. Some immediately availed themselves of the advice and betook themselves to Abyssinia. But Koreishite hostility pursued them even here. When the Meccan envoys arrived to demand the delivery of the refugees, that they might be put to death for abjuration of their old religion, the Negus sent for the exiles and asked them whether the charge was true. The reply of the brother of Ali, who was spokesman, is memorable in the history of Islâm. 'O king, we were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we adored idols, we lived in unchastity; we ate dead bodies and we spoke abominations; we disregarded every feeling of humanity and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood; we knew no law but that of the strong, when God raised among us a man of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called us to the Unity of God, and taught us not to associate anything with Him; he forbade us the worship of idols; and enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of neighbours; he forbade us to speak evil of

women, or to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to fly from vices and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to render alms, to observe the fast. We have believed in him; we accept his teachings and his injunctions to worship God and not to associate anything with Him. For this reason our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forego the worship of God and to return to the worship of idols of wood and stone and other abominations. They have tortured us and injured us, until finding no safety among them we have come to thy country.'

Whilst his disciples were seeking shelter in distant lands, Mohammed remained steadfast at his post. Undeterred by the cruelties to which he was subjected, he preached unceasingly amongst the Meccans and the outsiders who came to the city on business or pilgrimage. He adjured them 'by the noon-day brightness, by the night when she spreadeth her veil, by the day when it appeareth in glory,' by all the manifestations of nature as the evidences of God, to abandon their evil ways and abominations. He told them of 'the day of reckoning when the deeds done by man in this world shall be weighed before the Eternal Judge, when the children who had been

buried alive shall be asked for what crime they had been put to death, and when Heaven and Earth shall be folded up and none be near but God.'[1] The Koreish came several times to tempt him from his duty. They offered him wealth, even to make him their king, to induce him to desist from attacking their ancient deities and their old institutions. His refusal to listen to their messages made them still more furious.

Is Driven out of Tâyef.—Finding the Koreish obdurate, he proceeded to the neighbouring city of Tâyef, hoping to find the people there more willing to give heed to his preachings. He found them even more bigoted than the Meccans; they pelted him with stones and drove him from their midst. Wounded and bleeding, Mohammed returned to pursue his mission in his native city. His persistence led the Koreish to plan his murder. In the meantime came an invitation to him from the rival city of Yathreb to the north, some of whose inhabitants had already accepted Islâm. And there he and his followers betook themselves for safety.

The Hegira.—On the 16th of July 622 A.C. the Prophet, accompanied by Abû Bakr, left Mecca; and after three days wandering attended with

[1] See *The Spirit of Islâm*, p. 24.

many dangers from the pursuing Koreish, enraged at his escape, they reached Yathreb. This is the *Hijrat*, the exile of the Prophet.

Before this happened, the devoted and loving Khadija had died. She had borne him several children: the sons all died in infancy. Three daughters survived. The youngest, Fâtima (*az-zahra*—the Beautiful), 'Our Lady,' married Ali, and from her are descended the nobility of Islâm, the 'Syeds' and 'Sherifs.'[1]

Mohammed at Medîna.—At Yathreb the Teacher was received with wonderful enthusiasm; the city changed its name and was henceforth the City of the Prophet—*Medînat-un-Nabi*, or shortly Medîna. Special homes were allotted to the exiles—the *Muhâjirîn*; whilst the Medinites received the noble designation of Helpers—the *Ansâr*. A new brotherhood was created which united the Exiles and the Helpers by a tie stronger than the tie of blood—as many a later page in the history of Islâm proves.

Mohammed's Charter.—Mohammed was now not merely a prophet, a preacher of glad tidings, but the unanimously elected chief magistrate of a prosperous city. His first act was to issue a

[1] About Mohammed's marriages after the death of Khadîja, see *The Spirit of Islâm*, pp. 193-198.

charter defining the duties of the citizens, and the obligations of the allied Jews who lived in the neighbourhood, forbidding intestine warfare and bloodshed which had hitherto torn Yathreb to pieces, and requiring all disputes to be referred to the decision of the Prophet.[1]

Beginning of the Commonwealth of Islâm.—This was the beginning of the Commonwealth of Islâm. A humble, unpretentious place of worship was erected where Mohammed preached to enthusiastic throngs on charity, brotherhood, and the duty man owed to God and his fellow creatures.

In conjunction with other tribes the Meccans made several attempts to capture Medîna. They even seduced the neighbouring Jews to assist in the design. The attacks were repulsed, and the safety of Medîna and the progress of the new Gospel were permanently assured. The refractory and treacherous Jewish clans were ordered to quit the Medinite territories; one which had nearly brought destruction on the Moslems was more severely dealt with. Expeditions were now sent out to repress the raids of hostile tribes, and to punish crimes against unoffending people. They were enjoined 'in no case to use deceit or

[1] See *The Spirit of Islâm*, p. 52.

perfidy, or to kill a woman or a child.' They were told, 'in avenging the injuries inflicted upon us, molest not the harmless inmates of domestic seclusion, spare the weakness of the female sex, injure not the infant at the breast or those who are ill in bed. Abstain from demolishing the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants; destroy not the means of their subsistence, nor their fruit trees, and touch not the palm.'

Charter to the Christians.—In the ninth year of the Hegira, the Prophet granted to the Christians a charter which forms one of the noblest monuments of enlightened tolerance: 'To the Christians of Najrân and the neighbouring territories the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion, and their property—to the present as well as the absent and others besides; there shall be no interference with [the practice of] their faith or their observances; nor any change in their rights or privileges; no bishop shall be removed from his bishopric; nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood, and they shall continue to enjoy everything great and small as heretofore; no image or cross shall be destroyed; they shall not oppress or be oppressed; they shall not practise the rights of blood vengeance as in

the Days of Ignorance;[1] no tithes shall be levied from them, nor shall they be required to furnish provision for the troops.'

Truce with the Meccans.—After great difficulty, a truce of ten years was concluded with the Meccans. The Exiles seized the occasion to perform the time-honoured pilgrimage to the Kaaba. To avoid coming in contact with the hated Faithful, the heathen Koreish retired to the hills, whence they watched the large concourse that came with the Prophet to visit the Holy Shrine. The simple dignity and benevolence of Mohammed, the quietness and purity of behaviour of his followers perceptibly affected the Koreish; and before he left Mecca many came and accepted the Faith. The same old pledge which had been exacted from the early converts was taken from them. 'They would not associate anything with God; they would not commit larceny, adultery, or infanticide; they would not utter falsehood, nor speak evil.'

Embassies to Heraclius and the Chosroes.—On his return from the pilgrimage, Mohammed sent envoys to Heraclius the Emperor of the Greeks, and to the Chosroes of Persia to invite

[1] In the annals of Islâm the pre-Islâmite period is called by this name.

them to Islâm. Heraclius returned a polite reply; whilst the proud Persian tore the missive to pieces and drove the messenger from his presence with contumely. 'Thus will the empire of the Khusrû [the Chosroes] be torn asunder,' remarked the Prophet on hearing of the incident. The fate of Persia is engraved on the pages of history.[1]

Hardly a year was over before the Meccans broke the truce by murdering a number of tribesmen allied to the Medinites. The reign of iniquity had lasted long enough, and the time had arrived when the paganism of Mecca should come to an end.

Conquest of Mecca.—In 630 A.C. the Prophet marched with ten thousand men on the city from which he and his followers had been so cruelly driven only nine years before. The proud Koreish were thoroughly demoralised at the rapid approach of the Moslems and offered slight resistance. The people who had pursued Mohammed with unrelenting hatred, had subjected him and his followers to a fierce persecution, and had all this time endeavoured by every means to compass their destruction, were now at his mercy. But in the moment of the Faith's triumph every injury

[1] See *Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 27-34.

was forgotten, and the Koreish were treated with a kindness and generosity which have but few parallels in history. Not a house was robbed, not a citizen molested. The idols of the nation were, however, relentlessly struck down. Weeping the heathens stood round, fully hoping that the sacrilegious Moslems would be overwhelmed with some dire calamity. But as one idol after another fell to pieces and no help came from outside to stop the hands of the iconoclasts, they felt the force of the words at which they were used to scoff: 'Truth has come and falsehood vanisheth, for verily it is evanescent.' And they adopted Islâm in a body.

Year of Deputations.—The ninth year of the Hegira is famous in the annals of Islâm for the number of deputations that arrived at Medîna from all quarters to accept the Faith. They were received with consideration and treated with hospitality. A written treaty guaranteeing the privileges of the tribes was always granted to the deputies, who went back to their homes accompanied by a disciple to teach the newly converted people the duties of Islâm. To the missionaries whom he sent to the provinces, Mohammed always gave the following admonition. 'Deal gently with the people, and be not harsh, cheer

them, and contemn them not. And ye will meet with many people of the Book[1] who will question thee, 'What is the key to Heaven?' Reply to them, 'The key to Heaven is to testify to the truth of God, and to do good work.'

The Final Pilgrimage.—In the year 632 A.C., Mohammed, accompanied by over one hundred thousand of his followers, made a final pilgrimage to the Kaaba.

The Sermon on the Mount.—On this occasion standing on the Mount of Arafât he delivered to the vast multitude his famous sermon, only part of which has been preserved :—

'Ye people! listen to my words, for I know not whether another year will be vouchsafed to me after this year to find myself amongst you. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until ye appear before the Lord, as this day and this month is sacred for all; and remember ye shall have to appear before your Lord, who shall demand from you an account of all your actions. Ye people, ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you . . . treat your wives with kindness . . . verily ye have taken them on the security of God, and made them lawful unto you by the words of God.

[1] Jews and Christians.

'And your bondsmen and bondswomen. See that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear; and if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then part from them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be harshly treated.

'Ye people! listen to my words, and understand the same. Know that all Moslems are brothers unto one another. Ye are one brotherhood. Nothing which belongs to another is lawful unto his brother, unless freely given out of good will. Guard yourselves from committing injustice.

'Let him that is present tell it unto him that is absent. Haply he that shall be told may remember better than he who hath heard it.'

The Last Days of the Prophet.—On his return to Medîna he settled the organisation of the provinces and the tribal communities. Whilst delegates were despatched to every quarter to teach the people the principles and duties of the Faith, to put an end to blood-feud, infanticide, and the practices of heathenism.

The stress and strain of twenty-five years' incessant labour was now telling on a constitution which was by no means robust. Ever since he had come to Medîna he had been engaged in an

unceasing struggle with paganism, a struggle in which was involved the very existence of the little community over whom he was called to preside—a struggle from which, says the Moslem, divine help alone enabled him to emerge with safety. At the end, when success had crowned his ministry, and he saw the hosts of Arabia flocking to the fold of God, it left him exhausted; he felt that his work was finished and the end was near. Had it not been told him, 'When thou seest men enter in hosts the religion of God, then utter thou the praise of thy Lord and implore His pardon, for He loveth to turn in mercy to those who seek Him.'[1] The poison given to him some years before by a Jewess was also undermining the system. But up to the last he maintained his usual calmness and serenity of mind; and officiated at the public prayers until within three days of his death. The last time he appeared at the public service amidst the tears and sobs of the people, he recommended to all the observance of religious duties, and the practice of peace and good-will. He implored Heaven's mercy for all those present, and all who had fallen in the persecution of their enemies, and concluded with the following words of the Koran,

[1] Koran, sura cx.

'The dwelling of the other life we will give unto them who do not seek to exalt themselves on earth or to do wrong; for the happy issue shall attend the pious.'

The exertion, however, was too much for the feeble frame, and on his return to his apartments he lay down fainting on his bed, never to rise again.

Death of the Prophet, 632 A.C.—On Monday the 8th of June 632 A.C., whilst praying in whispers, the spirit of the Prophet took flight to 'the blessed companionship on high,' the last words which fell from his lips.

Thus disappeared from the scene one of the greatest, if not in very truth the greatest, of God's servants, who have lived and worked for the good of mankind. He found the bulk of his own people sunk in the grossest fetishism, decimated by tribal feuds, addicted to infanticide and the worst forms of pagan practices. Here and there individuals had broken away from the old cults, but were still groping in darkness in search of the road to truth and salvation, unsatisfied spirits to whom neither Judaism nor Christianity brought any solution to the enigmas of life.

In less than a decade he not only stamped out the pagan ways and habits which held the heart

of Arabia, but infused into his folk a new life, imparted to them a new conception of duty, of moral responsibilities of which they had been wholly devoid before. The beneficence of his work was not confined to his own countrymen. His words revived the religious spirit of surrounding nations, whose moral abasement was equally deplorable.

Mohammed's Character.—Mohammed's character has been described by many hands in the West, mostly hostile. The picture is naturally not always friendly. People do not easily put aside prejudices born of centuries of political and religious antagonism. It may, therefore, be of some interest to know the estimate of the Arabian Teacher formed by his immediate followers and disciples, many of whom were unquestionably men of great intelligence and moral vigour, who readily sacrificed for his Teachings, at a time when he was only a humble and persecuted preacher, wealth, position, and influence, and who, by their character and environment, were not likely to be influenced by light or common worldly motives.

His singular elevation of mind, his extreme delicacy and refinement of feeling, his purity and truth, form the constant theme of the traditions. Courteous to the great, affable to the humble,

indulgent to his inferiors, he won the love and admiration of all with whom he came in contact.

The humble preacher had risen to be the arbiter of the destinies of a nation, but the same humility of spirit, the same nobility of soul, austerity of conduct and stern devotion to duty, which had won him from his compatriots the designation of *al-Amîn,* ever formed the distinguishing traits of his character. Whilst the virtual ruler of Arabia, the equal of Chosroes and the Cæsars, 'he visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of the lowliest, mended his own clothes, milked his goats, and waited upon himself.'

'He never first withdrew his hand out of another's clasp and turned not before the other had turned. His hand was the most generous, his breast the most courageous, his tongue the most truthful; those who saw him were filled with reverence, those who came near him loved him. Modesty and kindness, patience, self-denial, and generosity pervaded his conduct and riveted the affections of all round him. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly . . . he would stop in the streets listening to the sorrows of the humblest. He would go to the houses of

the lowliest to console the stricken and comfort the heartbroken.' [1]

'There is something so tender and womanly and withal so heroic about the man,' says Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole, 'that one is in peril of finding the judgment unconsciously blinded by the feeling of reverence and well nigh love that such a nature inspires. He who, standing alone, braved for years the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdraw his hand from another's clasp; the beloved of children, who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in that sweet-toned voice. The frank friendship, the noble generosity, the dauntless courage and hope of the man, all tend to melt criticism in admiration.'

'He was an enthusiast, in that noblest sense when enthusiasm becomes the salt of the earth, the one thing that keeps men from rotting whilst they live. . . . He was an enthusiast when enthusiasm was the one thing needed to set the world aflame, and his enthusiasm was noble for a noble cause. He was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life-spring. He was the messenger

[1] The Mishkât.

of the One God; and never to his life's end did he forget who he was, or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with the most sweet humility, whose roots lay in the knowledge of his own weakness.'

CHAPTER III

Islâm after Mohammed.—Nothing gives a better idea of the hold Mohammed possessed over the hearts of his people than their sorrow when he lay sick and dying, or the outburst of grief which rent the city at the news of his death. At first they could hardly believe that the Master who had led them from darkness into light, from death unto life, could really be subject to the same laws as other beings. The words of the venerable Abû Bakr allayed the excitement: 'Mussulmans,' said he, 'if you adored Mohammed, know that Mohammed is dead; if it is God that you adore, know that He liveth, He never dies. Forget not this verse of the Koran, "Mohammed is only a man charged with a Mission; before him there have been men who received the heavenly mission and died"; nor this verse, "Thou too, Mohammed, shall die as others have died before thee."'

A great fabric had been built up, under divine guidance, by a master-mind; its foundations were laid in the conscience of mankind. But Islâm was yet in its infancy, at the mercy of hostile forces bent on its destruction. To keep alive the Faith and maintain intact the structure raised by him, it was necessary to elect, with all despatch, a successor to the Prophet.

Election of Abû Bakr as the Prophet's Vicegerent.—The choice fell on Abû Bakr, who, by virtue of his age and position in Mecca, held a high place in the estimation of the Arabs.

His Allocution.—After his election the venerable patriarch addressed the following allocution to the people: 'Ye people! now verily I am charged with the cares of government over you, although I am not the best amongst you. I need all your advice and all your help. If I do well, support me; if I mistake, counsel me. To tell truth to a person commissioned to rule is faithful allegiance; to conceal it is perfidy. In my sight the powerful and the weak are alike, and to both I wish to render justice. . . . Wherefore obey ye me, even as I obey the Lord and His apostle: if I neglect the laws of God and the Prophet, I have no more right to your obedience.'

Revolt of the Tribes.—No sooner was the

death of the Prophet bruited abroad than the tribes who had only recently adopted Islâm broke out in revolt. The discipline of Islâm and its rules and principles were too irksome to them. They repudiated their adhesion to the new religion and reverted to paganism. Medîna was hemmed in again by surging hordes of angry idolaters. Undaunted by his own danger, the aged Caliph sped on the expedition to Syria the Prophet had prepared to seek reparation for the murder of the Moslem envoy. Before sending them forth on their distant errand, in the spirit of the Master, he gave to the captain of his army the following injunction:—

His Injunction to the Troops.—'See that thou avoidest treachery, injustice, and oppression. Depart not in any wise from the right. Thou shalt mutilate none, neither shalt thou kill child or aged man, nor any woman. Destroy no palm-tree, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut not down any tree wherein is food for man or beast. Slay not the flocks or herds or camels, saving for needful sustenance. When thou makest a covenant, stand to it, and be as good as thy word. Ye may eat of the meat which the men of the land shall bring unto you in their vessels, making mention thereon of the name of the Lord. As you go on

you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way: let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. And the monks with shaven heads, if they submit, leave them unmolested. Now march forward in the name of the Lord, and may He protect you from sword and pestilence!'

How different this sounds to the command given to the ancient Jews: 'Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.'[1]

The Moslems believed in the righteousness of their cause, and in divine help in defence of their Faith; they were surrounded by formidable enemies; the very existence of their new life depended on their energy and self-sacrifice, but trust in God and enthusiasm led them to victory. The Syrians received a well-merited chastise-

[1] 1 Sam. xv. 3. Neither the lapse of ages nor the influence of Christianity in the West has made much difference in the nature of the ordinary man, since the Prophet of Israel gave this ferocious command to his people. The passion for vengeance, the desire to strike fear, are as strong as ever. The demands of rage, the dictates of expediency still stifle the voice of pity, the claims of justice. Rapine and slaughter, havoc and destruction, are still the gospel of the strong.

ment, whilst the revolted tribes were beaten back and gradually reduced to submission. Within the space of a few months the entire peninsula acknowledged once more the creed of Islâm.

Death of Abû Bakr and Election of Omar.—Abû Bakr held the reins of office for less than two years. He died on the 22nd August 634 A.C., and the great Omar was elected to the vicegerency of the Prophet.

War with Persia—Its Cause.—The pacification of the north-eastern corner of Arabia brought the Moslems into collision with the kingdom of Hira, a feudatory state subject to Persia. The raids from Hira led to an expedition into that country which ended in its annexation. The subjugation of Hira and Chaldæa brought the Persian forces into the field.

Battle of Kâdessia, 636 A.C.—The king of Persia was not willing to let a valuable part of his kingdom go into the hands of the despised Arabs. His pride was broken on the field of Kâdessia.

One of the first acts of the new Caliph was to prohibit any expedition beyond the Zagros Mountains, which he considered should always form the boundary between the Caliphate and

the Persian dominions; but the subjects of the King of Kings had not laid to heart the lessons of Kâdessia, and harassed the Moslem territories by constant raids. The Caliph was compelled to withdraw his prohibition, and an army marched into Persia.

Battle of Nehâwand, 642 A.C.—The battle of Nehâwand shattered for ever the empire of the Chosroes. 'The administration of Persia was regulated by an actual survey of the people, the cattle, and the fruits of the earth; and this monument which attests the vigilance of the Caliphs might have instructed the philosophers of every age.'[1]

A similar survey was made, under the Caliph's orders, of Chaldæa and Mesopotamia; peasants and proprietors alike were guaranteed in the possession of their lands and in the free enjoyment of their religion; the assessment was revised, and a network of canals for the improvement of irrigation was taken in hand.

War with Byzantium.—In the west the defeat of the Syrians had led Heraclius, the Byzantine Emperor, to send large armies to drive back the Arabs.

[1] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. vi. chap. i. p. 298.

Battle of Yermuk, Aug. 634 A.C.—Battle of Ajnâdin, 636 A.C.—The victories of Yermuk and Ajnâdin put an end to Byzantine rule in Syria.

Capitulation of Jerusalem.—Jerusalem submitted to the Caliph in person. Travelling with a single attendant, without escort and without any pomp or ceremony, Omar arrived at Jâbia, where he was met by a deputation of Christian notables. To them he accorded the free exercise of their religion, and the possession of their churches, subject to a light tax. Accompanied by the deputation, he proceeded towards Jerusalem, where he was received by Sophronius the Patriarch. The Chief of Islâm and the head of the Christians entered the sacred city together, conversing on its antiquities. The Caliph declined to perform his devotions in the church where he chanced to be at the hour of prayer, 'for,' he said to the Patriarch, 'had I done so, the Mussulmans in a future age might have infringed the treaty under colour of imitating my example.' [1]

The critics of Islâm have indulged in many theories to explain the marvellous victories of the Moslems over such great powers as Byzantium and Persia. 'Rhetorical expressions about the decaying condition of both empires and the

[1] *Short History of the Saracens*, p. 39.

youthful energies of the Moslems are unsatisfying to the inquirer who keeps the concrete facts before him.'[1] 'Both Byzantium and Persia had at their command genuine soldiers regularly armed and disciplined. The traditions of Roman warfare were not yet entirely lost, and the Persians still possessed their dreaded cuirassiers, before whom, in better times, even the armies of Rome had often fled. . . . The Emperor Heraclius was certainly the greatest man who had held the empire since Constantine and Julian. He was an astute diplomatist, a very competent general, and, as a soldier, bold even to rashness.' How was it then that 'the wretchedly armed Arabs, fighting not in regularly organised military divisions, but by families and clans, and under leaders who never before had faced disciplined troops,' shattered the armies of both Chosroes and Cæsar? And be it noted that in every battle—at Kâdessia, at Nehâwand, Yermuk, and Ajnâdin—they were outnumbered sometimes as six to one.[2] The Moslem explanation is Biblical in its simplicity:

[1] Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern History*, p. 76.

[2] At the battle of Yermuk the army of Heraclius numbered 240,000, whilst the Saracens were only 40,000 all told. At Kâdessia 30,000 Arabs were opposed to 100,000 Persians. At the battle of Medina Sidonia, which won Spain to the Caliphate, Târik had only 12,000 men against Roderick's host, at least five times as large.

'God took the heart out of the polytheists.' The Christian historian offers divers explanations, 'yet the phenomenon continues mysterious as before.'[1]

The conquest of Persia had brought to Medîna many Magian fanatics desirous of avenging on the Caliph the fall of their country. The simplicity of life led by Omar and the utter absence of guards and attendants favoured their design. One day, whilst sitting as usual in the mosque listening to the petitions of the people, he was attacked and mortally wounded by one of them.

Death of Omar, 644 A.C.—His death was an irreparable loss to Islâm. His knowledge of the character of his people, his extraordinary breadth of vision, his sagacity and vigour of mind, enabled him to exercise an influence over the Arabs which none of his successors ever achieved.

Election of Osmân.—An aged member of the family of Ommeya,[2] named Osmân, was now elected to the vacant chair.

[1] Nöldeke.

[2] The family of Hâshim and the family of Ommeya, distantly connected with each other, were two of the most prominent in Mecca; and for a long time there had existed among the latter a bitter feeling of hatred and jealousy towards the Hâshimides on account of their pre-eminence and worth. Mohammed belonged to the family of Hâshim; and the bulk of the Ommeyades were amongst his foremost persecutors. Osmân was one of the few among them who had accepted Islâm before the Hegira.

His Death, 656 A.C.—His partiality for and favouritism towards his kinsfolk gave rise to a mutiny in which he lost his life.

Conquest of Egypt under Osmân.—During Osmân's Caliphate Byzantine incursions from Alexandria into Syria had led the Moslem Government to despatch an expedition into Egypt, which completed its conquest in two battles. The addition of Northern Africa beyond Egypt was due to similar causes. The same destiny which led the English from Bengal to the Punjab, and still leads them on in Nigeria, led the Arabs from the confines of Egypt to the shores of the Atlantic.

On Osmân's tragical death, Ali, the cousin of the Prophet and the husband of his daughter Fâtima, was elected to the Caliphate. The legitimate heir to the spiritual headship of Islâm, as a temporal chief, Ali came before his time. Chivalrous, brave, and gifted, his humanity and gentleness were mistaken for weakness; and his short government was disturbed by rebellions. The first was suppressed without difficulty; whilst engaged in dealing with the second, headed by Muâwiyah, a kinsman of Osmân, who held the governorship of Syria, Ali was assassinated by a zealot, one of a body who wanted to bring peace

to Islâm by the murder of both the Caliph and the rebel governor.

Death of Ali, 661 A.C.—The latter escaped, but Ali fell a victim to their fanaticism.

On the murder of Ali his eldest son, Hassan, was elected to the Caliphate, but, fond of ease, he was easily induced to renounce the dignity in favour of Muâwiyah.

Accession of the Ommeyades to Power.—With the death of Ali and the renunciation of Hassan came to an end the Republic of Islâm. Up to this time the office of Caliph was elective, and the government essentially democratic. Muâwiyah, whilst retaining the form of election, made it in reality hereditary and autocratic. The seat of government was removed from Medîna to Damascus, where the head of the state surrounded himself by Syrian mercenaries.

The Butchery of Kerbela—The Martyrdom of Hussain.—Muâwiyah died in 680 A.C., and was succeeded by his son Yezîd, the Domitian of the Arabs. Hussain, the second son of the Caliph Ali, had never acknowledged the title of Yezîd, whose vices he despised and whose character he abhorred; and when the Moslems of Mesopotamia invited him to release them from the Ommeyade yoke he felt it his duty to respond to their appeal.

Accompanied by his family and a few retainers he left for Irâk. On the way, at a place called Kerbela, on the western bank of the Euphrates, they were overtaken by an Ommeyade army, and, after a heroic struggle, lasting over several days, were all slaughtered save the women and a sickly child, also named Ali, who were carried as captives to Damascus.

The butchery of Kerbela caused a thrill of horror throughout Islâm, and gave birth in Persia to an undying national sentiment.[1]

Conquest of Spain, 712 A.C.—Under Walid the fifth sovereign of this family, Spain was conquered and added to the Caliphate. The seventh Ommeyade ruler was the pious Omar II., deservedly called the Marcus Aurelius of the Arabs.

The Ommeyades held the reins of government for nearly ninety years.

The Rise of the House of Abbâs.—In the middle of the eighth century of the Christian era Western Asia was the scene of a great revolution,

[1] For an account of this tragedy, see Gibbon, vol. vi. p. 279, and *Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 83-87. Hussain was married to a daughter of Yezdjard the last King of Persia. The life of the lad, saved by the indomitable Arab courage of Zainab, the sister of Hussain, gave to Islâm its nobility, for in him was united the blood of the Prophet with that of the Sassanide monarchs of Persia.

which resulted in the downfall of the Ommeyades. The revolt was headed by a descendant of Abbâs, an uncle of the Prophet. The contest between the Ommeyades and Abbassides reminds us, in its bitterness and cruelty, of the later quarrel between the White and the Red Rose of England.

Foundation of the Ommeyade Caliphate in Spain, 756 A.C.—The Abbassides were successful and the Ommeyades were practically annihilated. Only one solitary scion of this ill-fated family escaped to Spain, where he founded the brilliant empire of Cordova. The Abbassides held the Eastern Caliphate with its seat in Bagdad from 756 A.C. to 1258 A.C.

Destruction of Bagdad.—When Bagdad was destroyed by the Mongols, a member of the Abbasside family succeeded in escaping to Cairo. Here he was recognised as Caliph by the Sultan of Egypt, and was surrounded by all the dignity attached to the pontifical office. The eighth Pontiff, by a formal act, renounced the Caliphate in favour of Sultan Selim, the great Ottoman conqueror.

The Title of the Ottoman Caliphs.—The title of the Sultans of Turkey to the spiritual headship of Islâm is based on this renunciation, and on the possession by them of the seal, mantle, and

staff of the Prophet; and their claim is recognised as valid by the whole of the Sunni world.

Mansûr, the second Abbasside Caliph.—The first eight Caliphs of the house of Abbâs were men of great ability and force of character. Mansûr, the second sovereign, was the real founder of the Abbasside polity and system of administration, which became in after years the model for all civilised Mussulman States, and which were copied in later times by the Christian countries of Europe.

Hârûn-ar-Rashîd and Mamûn.—Under Hârûn-ar-Rashîd, the hero of the *Arabian Nights,* and his son Mâmûn the Caliphate of Bagdad attained its zenith. It was indeed the Augustan age of the Arabs. But the achievements of the Moslems in the domain of intellect extend over the whole period during which the Abbassides exercised their suzerainty over Western Asia and Egypt.

The Ommeyade Caliphate of Spain. — The Empire founded in Spain by the Ommeyade Abdur Rahmân, surnamed *Dâkhil* (the 'Enterer'), rivalled that of Bagdad in the glory of arms and learning. The eighth sovereign of this dynasty, Abdur Rahmân (an-Nâsir), who assumed

the title and dignity of Caliph, was the most gifted monarch who has ever ruled over Spain. With the disintegration of the Cordovan Caliphate, in the eleventh century of the Christian era, the country split up into several small kingdoms, until they were re-united under the ægis of the Almoravide monarchs of North Africa.[1]

The Fatimide Caliphate of North Africa.—In the beginning of the tenth century, a descendant of Ali, Obaidullah, surnamed *al-Mahdi* (the 'Guide'), founded the great Fatimide Empire of Northern Africa.

The Fatimides conquered Sicily and Calabria and held Genoa for a considerable time. They were not only redoubtable conquerors but lavish patrons of learning, arts, and sciences. They established colleges, public libraries, and scientific institutes. To the central scientific institute at Cairo[2] was attached a grand Lodge for initiating candidates into the esoteric doctrines of *Ismailism.*[3] This Lodge became the model of all the

[1] See *Short History of the Saracens*, chap. xxix.

[2] Cairo (*al-Kâhira*) was founded by one of the generals of al-Muiz the contemporary and rival of an-Nâsir the Ommeyade Caliph of Cordova; see *Short History of the Saracens.*

[3] See *The Spirit of Islâm.*

lodges created afterwards in Asia and Europe. Among the Druses of Lebanon who follow this cult, the sixth Fatimide Caliph, the eccentric al-Hakam, believed by them to be still alive, receives divine honours.

With the death of the fourteenth sovereign of this house and the assumption of power in Egypt by Saladin[1] the Fatimide dynasty disappeared from the scene.

The Rise of Learning and Philosophy in Islâm.—Even in the early days of the Caliphate, the pursuit of knowledge was not neglected at Medîna, and all the energies of the Moslem nation were not taken up in the struggle in which they had become involved with the surrounding nations. The Caliph Ali lectured to large multitudes of people on various branches of learning.

The sack of Medîna by the Ommeyades destroyed the primitive school. It was revived by Ali's great-grandson, Jaafar the Trusty, who died in 765 A.C. He is the real founder of speculative philosophy among the Moslems. The thinkers and scholars who flourished later derived their inspiration from him.

[1] See *Short History of the Saracens*, p. 348.

The Mutazalite or rationalistic school was founded by Wâsil, who died in 785 A.C. Mamûn, the sixth Abbasside Caliph, was a strenuous upholder of his doctrines.

'The Brothers of Purity.'—Towards the close of the tenth century a body of thinkers, whose researches extended to every department of the human mind, and whose great aim was to introduce a spirit of eclecticism in Islâm, established a brotherhood of intellect, which was to embrace all men animated with the single purpose of promoting the moral and intellectual welfare of the nation.

The Crusades.—The Crusades, which devastated Western Asia for two centuries, and inflicted untold miseries on the unfortunate people exposed to the merciless raids of the hordes of Europe who professed 'the religion of peace,' involved the Moslem nations in a life-and-death struggle, during which intellectual development came to a standstill.

Capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, 1099 A.C.—Tripoli, a famous seat of learning in those days, was reduced to ashes; Antioch and other cities were turned into shambles. On the 15th July 1099 Jerusalem was taken by storm; and the triumph of the Cross was celebrated by a

slaughter of over seventy thousand people. Neither age nor sex met with mercy. The squares, the streets, and the houses were strewn with the dead bodies of men and women, and the mangled limbs of children. Many were burnt alive under the portico of the principal mosque, the blood of the victims 'reached the horses' bridles.' 'The carnage,' says Michaud, 'lasted a week: the few who escaped were reduced to horrible servitude.'

Capture of Jerusalem by Saladin, 1187.—In 1187 A.C. Saladin recaptured the city. He released all prisoners, supplied them with food and money, and allowed them to depart with a safe conduct; no woman was insulted; no child was hurt; no person was slain.

Eruption of the Tartars.—Hardly had the Moslems recovered from the destruction and havoc wrought by the Crusades, when the eruption of the Mongolian savages from the steppes of Tartary, falling like an avalanche, swept away all vestiges of culture and civilisation, and converted Middle and Western Asia into a charnel-house. And although centuries have passed since the sack of Bagdad and other famed centres of Moslem learning and arts, Islâm has not regained yet its true life and progressive vitality.

After the fall of Cordova the continuity of Islâmic civilisation in Spain was maintained, not only by the petty principalities which sprang up in its place, but also by the Almoravide and Almohade sovereigns, who reunited in their vigorous hands the greater part of the Ommeyade Caliphate.

Granada.—The break-up of the Almohade Empire, in 1227 A.C., led to the gradual destruction by the Christian hordes of the minor Moslem kingdoms. Granada alone, for nearly two centuries, held aloft the torch of knowledge and civilisation. But the fires of the Inquisition had already been lighted in Christian Spain by the 'pious' Ferdinand and the 'saintly' Isabella.

The Fall of Granada—Destruction of Moslem Civilisation, 1498 A.C.—And when, after a heroic struggle, the city of the Banu-Nasr, the home of culture, chivalry, and arts, capitulated to its Christian assailants, the glory of Moorish Spain died with the martyrs who were burnt at the stake or slaughtered like sheep regardless of age or sex, or suffocated in the caverns to which they betook themselves for refuge.

The Sunni Church.—The spiritual allegiance of Christendom is divided between four Churches;

of the world of Islâm between two—the Sunni and the Shiah. The foundation of the Sunni Church, which owns nowadays the largest number of followers, was laid by Mansûr, the second Caliph of the House of Abbas.[1] And although the superstructure was completed under his successors, its whole character and organisation are due to his genius.

The wide extent of the Abbasside Caliphate helped in the diffusion of its power and influence. At the present moment out of nearly seventy millions of Mohammedans in India subject to the British Crown, fifty belong to the Sunni Church. So do the Mussulmans of China, Tartary, Afghanistan, Asiatic and European Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, Northern and Central Africa, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Russia, Ceylon, the Straits and the Malayan Peninsula. And almost all acknowledge the spiritual headship of the Ottoman Sovereign.

Shiahism.—The Shiah Church traces its foundation to the Caliph Ali and the immediate descendants of the Prophet, regarded as the rightful expounders of his teachings. Some twenty millions of Indian Mussulmans are Shiahs; Shiahism is also the State religion of Persia. There are large numbers of Shiahs in the Hijaz, in Egypt and other

[1] See *Short History of the Saracens.*

parts of the world, but always in a minority. The question of the title to the spiritual and temporal headship of Islâm forms the chief point of difference between the two churches. The Sunnis are the advocates of the principle of election; the Shiahs of apostolical descent by appointment and succession; and this difference, which is essentially of a dynastic character,[1] gave birth to constant quarrels.

Signs, however, are not wanting that owing to the pressure of extraneous circumstances both Sunnis and Shiahs have begun to realise the necessity of greater harmony and goodwill.

The Sects of Islâm.—Difference of opinion concerning doctrines and dogmas has given birth in Islâm, as it has in Christianity, to numerous sects.

The Sunni Church is divided into four principal 'persuasions'—the Hanafi, Shâfeï, Mâliki and Hanbali—designated after their respective founders. The followers of any one of these communions may validly offer their prayers under the leadership of a member of another. Hanafïsm is professed by the bulk of the Indian Mussulmans and Arabs, by the Afghans and almost all Central Asian Moslems, the Turks and Egyptians.

[1] See *The Spirit of Islâm*.

The Shiah Church also is divided into several sub-sects, of which the principal (the Asnâ-aasharia)[1] constitutes the state religion of Persia.

Ashaarïsm.—The philosophical side of Islâm is represented nowadays by *Ashaarïsm* and *Mutazalaism.* The first embodies the orthodox doctrines of the Sunni Church. It holds to the belief in corporeal resurrection at the Last Account, and affirms that the Koran is eternal and uncreated; and that God will be visible in the next world to human sight. Whilst maintaining that the evolution of principles ceased in the third and fourth centuries of the Hegira, in order to bring the rules enunciated by the great expounders of law and religion into conformity with the change of times and conditions of society, it generally allows the widest latitude in their interpretation and application.

With regard to the doctrine of free-will, it holds that there is neither absolute compulsion nor absolute freedom, but 'God does whatever He pleases, for He is Sovereign Lord.'

Mutazalaism.—Mutazalaism, on the other hand, denies the doctrine of corporeal resurrection and

[1] The Duo-decemian. So called as it recognises the spiritual headship of the twelve Apostles of the House of Mohammed.

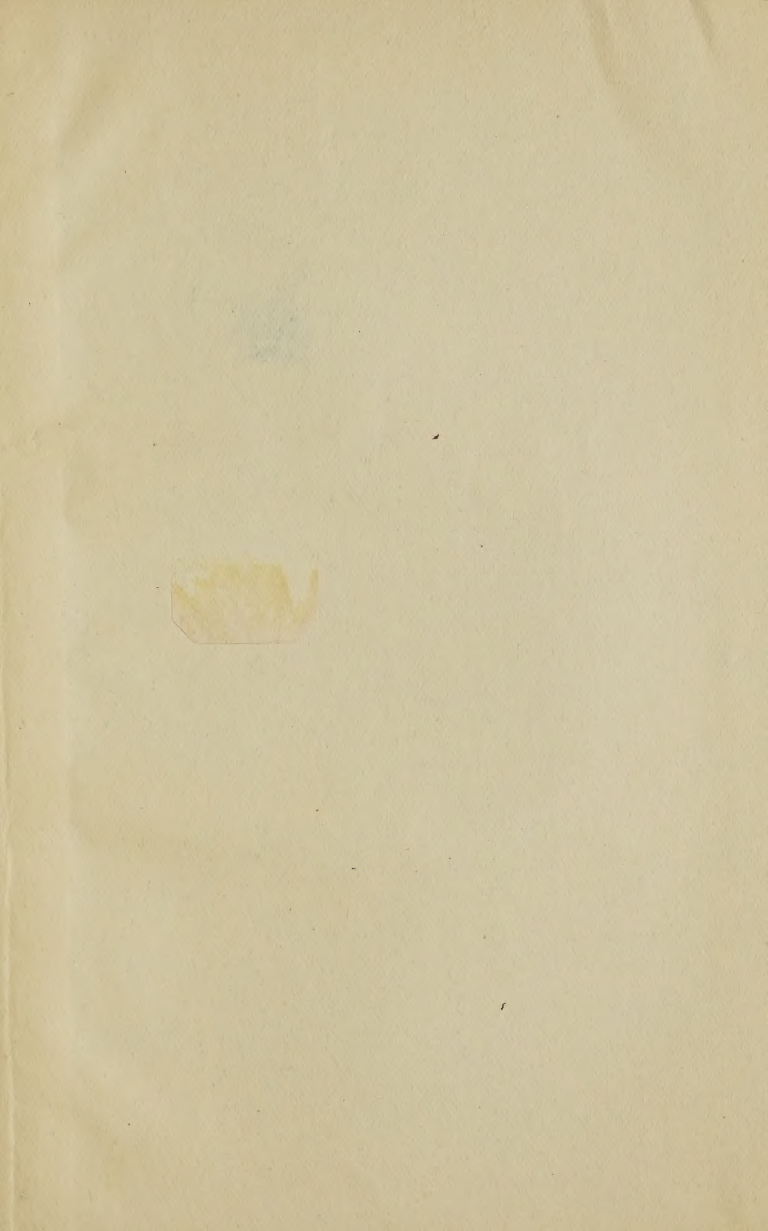
corporeal vision. It enunciates that the Koran is the created word of God and not eternal, that God alone is Eternal, that man is the 'creative efficient of his actions, good and bad, and gets reward and punishment in the future world by merit for what he does'; 'that the All-Wise does only that which is beneficial and good.' It further holds that the Divine ordinances which regulate the conduct of men are the results of growth and development. It maintains that the knowledge of God is within the province of reason, and with the exception of Himself everything else is liable to change or to suffer extinction.[1]

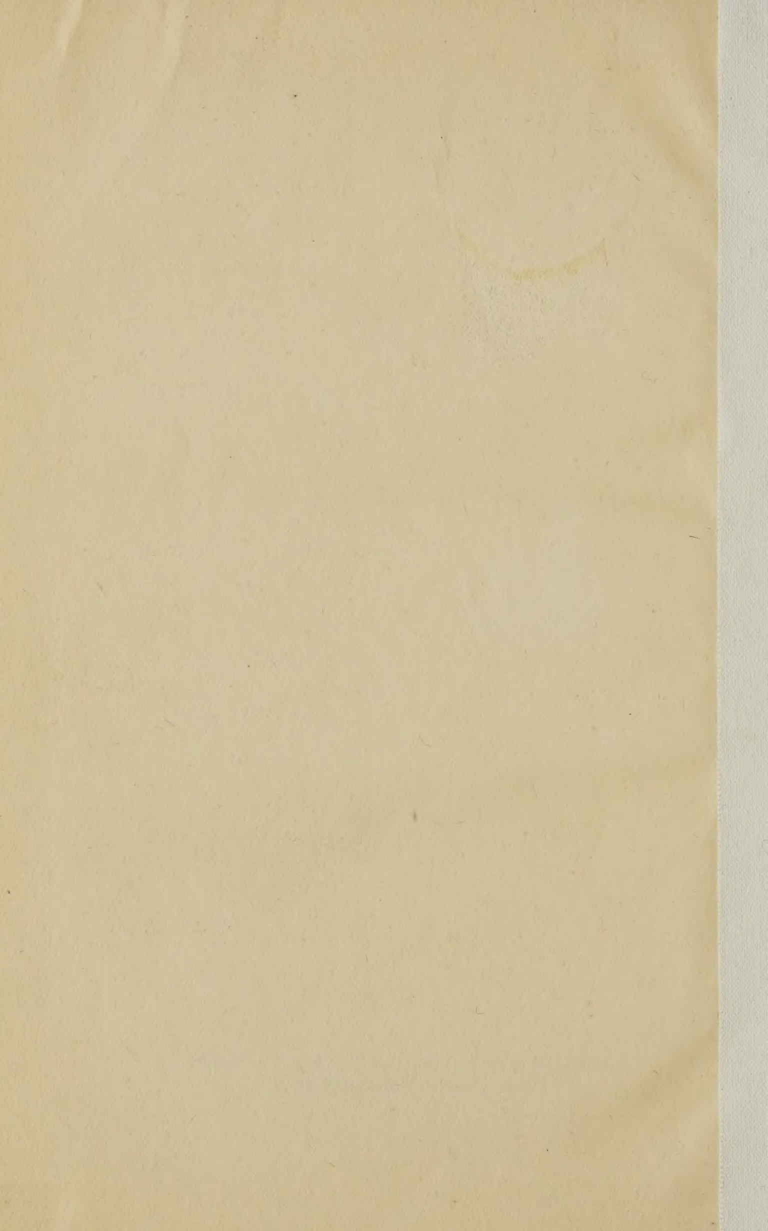
[1] For a full elucidation of their doctrines, see *The Spirit of Islâm.*

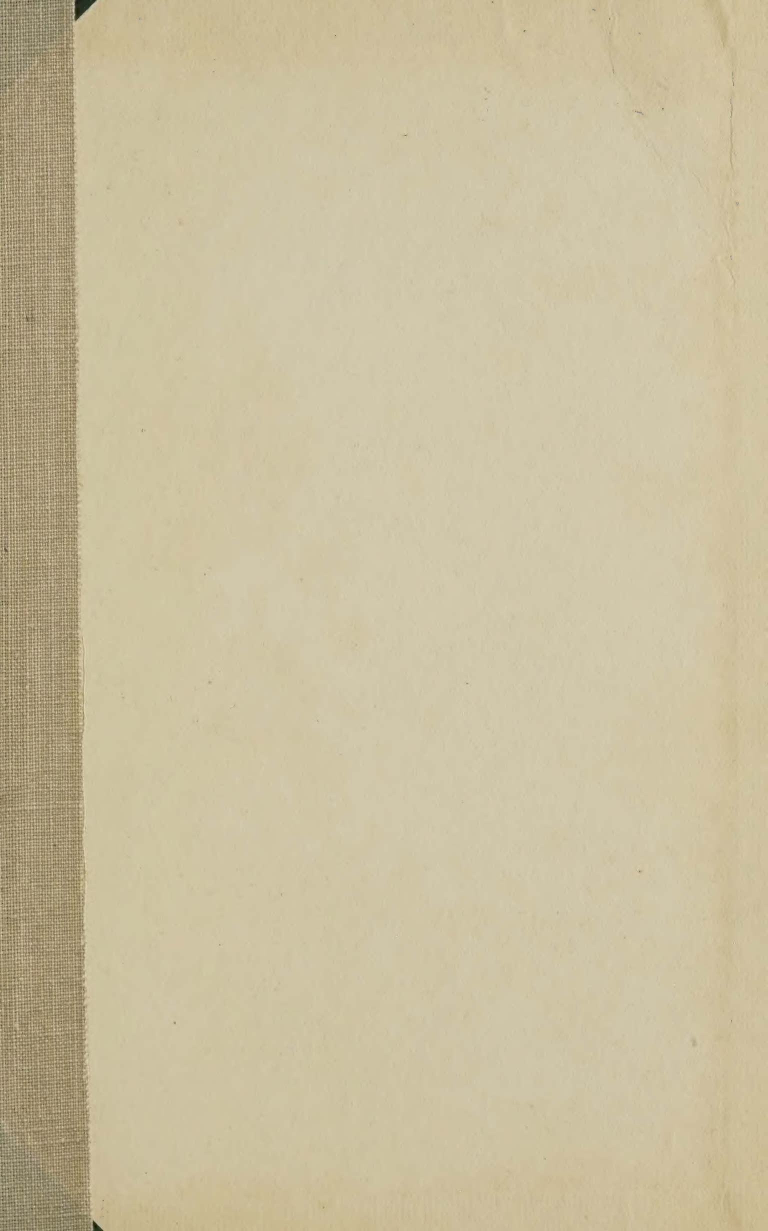
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